Application No. 09/869,205

REMARKS

Prior to this Amendment, claims 26-35 were pending. By this Amendment, claims 26, 28, 30-31, and 33 are amended, and new claims 36-43 are added. Claims 26-43 are now pending and are presented for reconsideration and allowance.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 26 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,144,989 to Hodjat et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed. The Hodjat et al. patent is directed to managing a network of agents. An initiator agent receives a user-input request. Since it does not itself have a relevant interpretation policy, the initiator agent queries its downchain agents whether the queried agent considers such message, or part of such message, to be in its domain of responsibility. Each queried agent recursively determines whether it has an interpretation policy of its own that applies to the request, and if not, further queries its own further downchain neighboring agents. The further agents eventually respond to such further queries. Predetermined automatic algorithms are disclosed for resolving any contradictions in the responses of different agents.

The Hodjat et al. patent discloses tests for agents to determine whether a particular message is within their domain of responsibility. However, the Hodjat et al. patent does not describe a process of actually conducting a dialogue with a user, as claimed in claim 26. For instance, the Hodjat et al. patent discloses a special processing unit 316 that does the local work for which the agent 310 is responsible, other than routing. The special processing unit 316 can be regarded as a "black box" because the designer of the system can use whatever method he or she deems suitable to implement the local processes unique to the requirements of a given agent. The Hodjat et al. patent does not provide detail on the operation of the special processing unit 316 that is relevant to the present invention, and instead concentrates on disclosing the solution

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to which the patent is directed-namely, routing messages among various hierarchically-arranged agents. For instance, see Col. 7, lines 3-6, stating "Special processing unit 316 is referred to as a 'black box' because its functions are unimportant to, and therefore hidden from, the inter-agent communication mechanism of the system."

In particular, the Hodjat et al. patent does not describe interpreting the statements in a logical statement that acts as input to the rational unit, determining the existence of at least one behavioral principle applying to the logical statement among a set of predetermined principles, deducing one or more logical consequences as a function of the at least one behavioral principle, and determining communication actions to be made corresponding to the deduced logical consequences and being output from the rational unit, as claimed in claim 26.

For instance, with regard to some of the bases articulated in the Office Action in support of the § 102 rejection, Applicant respectfully submits that applying an interpretation policy to determine, among agents, which agent should handle certain messages, and then routing those messages to the appropriate agent in the hierarchy, as disclosed in the Hodjat et al. patent, cannot fairly be regarded as any of the steps of the method claimed in claim 26, such as determining the existence of at least one behavioral principle applying to the logical statement among a set of predetermined principles, deducing one or more logical consequences as a function of the at least one behavioral principle, or determining communication actions to be made corresponding to the deduced logical consequences.

In view of the above, a *prima facie* case for anticipation has not been made, and cannot be made, on the basis of the Hodjat et al. patent. Applicant respectfully submits that the § 102 rejection should be withdrawn.

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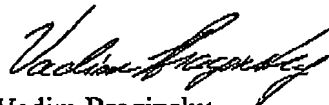Application No. 09/869,205

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation that claims 34-35 have been allowed, and that claims 27-33 have been objected to as depending from a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In light of the allowability of base claim 26 for at least the reasons stated above, the objection to claims 27-33 should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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